

# Cyclones

## BE PREPARED

Like other natural disasters, a cyclone is dangerous and unpredictable. There are a few things you need to know to ensure the safety of you and your family.

### Are you in a cyclone prone area?

You can find out if you are in a cyclone prone area by asking the Cairns Regional Council, checking their website at <http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/disaster> and asking your family and other community members.

This map shows the areas in Australia that have had cyclone activity over the past 150 years. The most cyclone prone areas include the coastal regions of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

This map shows that hurricanes and cyclones form over most of the world's tropical waters between about 50 and 220 latitude (in the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and that the most intense hurricanes and cyclones occur in the north-west Pacific.

### Preparing for the cyclone

As the cyclone season approaches, there are a few steps you and your family need to take to ensure your safety and to prevent damage to your property and community.

#### Steps to take

- ▶ Check the building regulations. In some areas, if you are building a house, there are strict regulations that need to be followed. These can be found at your local council.
- ▶ Ensure your home is in good condition, with a safe and secure structure, and no loose tiles on the roof.
- ▶ Clear property of loose items or secure them. This reduces flying debris.
- ▶ Locate a safe place near by. Find where your nearest safe higher ground is in case of flood warnings.
- ▶ Assemble your emergency survival kit, tinned food, water, medicines, important documents, torches, candles and matches, portable radio and batteries.
- ▶ Discuss your emergency plan with your family. Decide on the safest places in the house in the event of a cyclone, and ensure that your emergency kit is easily accessible to all family members. Make sure a list of emergency contacts is clearly visible and a copy is in the emergency kit.

#### Household emergency kit

Assembling a household emergency kit is important for your survival during a cyclone. Find out what you should include.

#### Warning signs

The tracking and monitoring of cyclones has

improved with technology and communication. Meteorologists will notify the appropriate authorities if they find that a cyclone is forming and assign it a name and category.

The authorities and media will then alert communities at risk and let them know what steps they should take to ensure their safety, including:

- ▶ Continue listening to the local radio/ watching TV for updates and more warnings
- ▶ Board or tape your windows
- ▶ Fill water containers
- ▶ Ensure car is fuelled and is undercover
- ▶ Check your emergency kit and gather extra clothing and shoes.

If you choose to leave your home well before the cyclone hits your region, remember to turn off gas and electricity, take your household emergency kit and lock your home.

### During the cyclone

During the cyclone, ensure you:

- ▶ Stay inside and shelter in the strongest part of the house (e.g. bathroom)
- ▶ Protect yourself with a mattresses and blankets
- ▶ Hold firmly to a strong fixture, such as pipes, or stay under a solid table
- ▶ Remain indoors until the cyclone has passed. Remember there is a brief period of calm in the eye of the cyclone, before the cyclone continues.

### The calm after the storm

Remain indoors until you are advised that it is safe.

When you do go outside, be aware of debris, buildings and trees may be unstable and powerlines may have fallen.

If you are travelling use recommended routes to avoid accidents, flooding of rivers and roads, and debris falling in the path of the cyclone.